United Nations E/CN.6/2000/PC/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 March 2000
English
Original: Spanish

Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"
Third session
3-17 March 2000
Agenda item 2
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Letter dated 29 February 2000 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Lima from 8 to 10 February 2000.

The basic objective of this meeting was to evaluate the progress made since the seventh session of the Regional Conference and since the Fourth World Conference on Women, with a view to submitting recommendations aimed at accelerating the process of change with respect to the situation of women, in accordance with the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean. This meeting also served as the Latin American and Caribbean preparatory meeting for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

In view of the foregoing, I should be grateful if you would have the documentation adopted at the eighth session of the Regional Conference (see annexes I and II) circulated as documents of the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

(*Signed*) Manuel **Picasso**
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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Annex I

[Original: English and Spanish]

Lima Consensus

The countries represented at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling that six years have passed since the adoption of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, five since the adoption of the Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and three since the seventh session of the Regional Conference, which identified obstacles and established priority areas of action through the Santiago Consensus,

Considering the Port-of-Spain Consensus, adopted at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women, held in October 1999,

Reiterating its adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as the legal framework for commitments undertaken at the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and our primary responsibility for implementation and accountability in respect of these agreements,

Recognizing the existence of a global consensus as to the relevance and urgent need to fulfil all commitments assumed at regional and international intergovernmental meetings, especially the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and at the five-year review processes for those conferences, as well as the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (1996) and the World Food Summit (1996),

Acknowledging the efforts undertaken by the Governments of the region to mainstream the gender perspective in public policy and to create mechanisms for formulating policies to promote equity and equality,

Asserting the need to accelerate, further, and consolidate successes already achieved and to take vigorous action to overcome constraints and obstacles created by the persistence of policies and cultural practices that do not take into account the gender perspective and therefore accentuate inequities, particularly in regard to gender,

Concerned by the persistence of discrimination in relation to the enjoyment of human rights, which are universal, indivisible, inalienable and interdependent,

According priority to overcoming, in the shortest possible span of time, all obstacles to sustainable human development, the elimination of poverty, the attainment of social justice, and the equitable participation of women in political affairs and their access to full citizenship in the countries of the region,

Recognizing that in spite of the apparent and real advances made by women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, the fundamental structure of gender relations remains disadvantageous to the majority of girls and women,

Concerned by the profound economic and social inequities and the escalation of the culture of violence, including gender-based violence, which are apparent in Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recognizing that economic globalization, trade liberalization, structural adjustment programmes, external debt and the resulting migration patterns are factors which, among others, can have specific and sometimes negative impacts on the lives and situation of women, particularly those of the least economically developed regions, and can cause the dislocation of families, communities and nations,

Concerned with the inadequate allocation of resources for development and for the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing,

Recognizing the importance of working to ensure that women are able to participate on an equal footing and are properly represented in the media,

Recognizing the important contribution of non-governmental organizations, especially those concerned with women's issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, including those set up following the Fourth World Conference on Women, in connection with the implementation, monitoring and appraisal of the Platform for Action and the Regional Programme of Action and with the design and implementation of public policies aimed at promoting gender equity and equality,

Welcoming the documents prepared by the secretariat for the eighth session of the Regional Conference, especially the document entitled "The Challenge of Gender Equity and Human Rights on the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century", and acknowledging that it reflects the consensus view of the Governments of the region following a series of evaluations and reports prepared, in many cases, with the participation of civil society,

Having discussed the subject of "Gender equity: the foundation for a just and equitable society" and, within that context, two strategic areas of the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, namely, (1) gender equity, and (2) human rights, peace and violence,

The countries represented at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean undertake to:

(a) Strengthen the implementation of the Regional Programme of Action beyond the year 2001, promote the effective implementation of the Platform for Action, and participate actively in the appraisal of and follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(b) Promote the effective application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women as a legal framework for all programmatic action in connection with those two instruments, and appeal to the States parties to review their reservations to both Conventions;

(c) Urge the States of the region to sign, ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(d) Reorient public policies, placing social and gender equity at the centre of governmental concerns, and achieve this by systematically basing these policies on assessments of their differential impact on men and women and monitoring their implementation;

(e) Create or strengthen institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and the promotion of equal opportunity and endow them with sufficient amounts of all relevant types of resources, a legal identity and budgetary autonomy, along with political support at the highest level so that they may, *inter alia*, promote and monitor gender policies on a transversal basis;

(f) Promote socio-economic policies that foster growth and sustainable development with equity and equality in order to combat the intergenerational transmission of poverty by allocating, redistributing and increasing resources;

(g) Emphasize the need for a coherent, coordinated and participatory approach among all partners in development in the implementation of national poverty eradication plans and programmes which fully take into account the gender perspective;

(h) Promote positive actions to overcome any negative effects of globalization and trade liberalization and to ensure equal and fair access to its benefits and opportunities;

(i) Orient State policies so as to redress inequalities and guarantee the protection of the human rights of women and girls, devoting special attention to rural and indigenous, black, disabled, displaced, migrant and refugee women, focusing action on the elimination of the existing gap between de facto and *de jure* equality and taking into account the pluricultural, multiethnic and multilingual nature of the countries of the region;

(j) Strengthen democracy in the region through the adoption of policies and measures that facilitate women's rights to full and equal citizenship and their participation in decision-making in all sectors and at all levels, bearing in mind that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems;

(k) Support the strengthening of women's organizations and networks and their work in civil society, in order to increase their capacity to influence public affairs in the countries as they relate to the search for a solution to the problem of women's inequality and their participation in the design, evaluation and monitoring of public policies at all levels;

(l) Support the implementation of plans and programmes of action aimed at ensuring access to education for girls and boys together with satisfactory educational coverage and quality, promote the elimination of all forms of sexist discrimination in educational processes and content, and do away with the stereotypes that are perpetuated through these channels;

(m) Promote a cultural change whereby all sectors of society will become involved in the empowerment of women and in the search for gender equity and equality, in particular by engaging men as active and integral players in this change;

(n) Guarantee the protection of women's human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, and address violations of these rights with particular attention to all forms of gender-based violence and its root causes, including the reproduction of a culture of violence;

(o) Guarantee, at the national level, preventive and comprehensive health care for women and equitable access to quality health care services at all stages of their lives, bearing in mind the differential impact of gender in terms of health and illness;

(p) Formulate and improve programmes designed to safeguard women's health and uphold their sexual and reproductive rights in accordance with the provisions adopted in Cairo at the International Conference on Population and Development and in Beijing at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(q) Promote measures to ensure a better quality of life for women at all stages in their lives, and especially for elderly women;

(r) Prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls and their underlying causes;

(s) Promote and mobilize, with the support of international cooperation, the resources necessary to protect and care for women and children who are victims of armed conflict;

(t) Promote peace according to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter as an indispensable condition for achieving social and economic development with equity;

(u) Develop strategies for creating more and better jobs for women along with equitable systems for providing social protection;

(v) Promote a recognition of the social and economic contribution made by the unpaid work performed by women, predominantly in the home, and urge Governments to provide them with social security coverage;

(w) Promote action aimed at fostering equitable access for women to communications and new information technologies and at helping to counteract stereotypes of women in the media;

(x) Strengthen systems for collecting and processing statistical data disaggregated by sex, and adopt the use of gender indicators that will contribute to a baseline analysis of the status of women and to the implementation of public policies at the national and regional levels and that will make it possible to improve the monitoring and assessment of regional and international agreements;

(y) Urge bilateral and multilateral international cooperation agencies to strengthen their technical and financial support programmes on the basis of mutual respect and to foster an exchange of experiences in light of the fact that international cooperation is an effective means of promoting equality, equity and human rights;

The countries represented at the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean resolve:

1. That the Lima Consensus will constitute the region's contribution to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled, "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century";

2. To submit the agreements adopted at this session of the Regional Conference to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for its consideration at its twenty-eighth session, to be held in Mexico City from 3 to 7 April 2000.

Annex II

[Original: English and Spanish]

Resolution adopted by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean at its eighth session

Resolution 1(VIII)

Participation of associate members of regional economic commissions as observers in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, at its eighth session,

Recalling resolution 574 (XXVII) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted on 16 May 1998, which, inter alia, requests the member countries of the Commission, through their representatives to the General Assembly, to devise the necessary mechanisms to permit the associate members to participate in the special sessions of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the programmes of action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and in their preparatory processes;

Taking into account the agreements reached at the twenty-eight and twenty-ninth meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to recommend that the eighth session of the Regional Conference should adopt a resolution requesting support for associate members of the Commission to enable them to participate in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" to be held at the United Nations in June 2000;

Welcomes resolution 54/142 of 17 December 1999, entitled Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", which calls for the participation of associate members of the regional economic commissions in the special session, subject to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and in the preparatory process thereof, in the same capacity of observer that applied to their participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Resolution 2(VIII)

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, at its eighth session,

Considering the important contribution made by the non-governmental organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially those concerned with women's issues, in connection with the implementation, follow-up and appraisal of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001,

Expressing appreciation for their ample participation in the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 54/142, whereby it was decided that non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as the non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women, might participate in the preparatory process and in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",

Recognizing that negotiations on mechanisms relating to the participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process and in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" have not yet been concluded,

Decides to recommend that the non-governmental organizations involved in the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, including organizations which were set up in the context of the Conference or which embraced issues pertaining to the advancement of women following that Conference, should play a greater role in the preparatory process and in the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Resolution 3(VIII)

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, at its eighth session,

Bearing in mind that the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2, on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, call for the regional commissions to play a role as catalyst for the exchange of experiences and best practices, and to promote regional cooperation for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective,

Requests the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, within existing resources earmarked for research, to establish a general data base, to be updated regularly, in which all programmes and projects carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean region by agencies or organizations of the United Nations system are listed, thus permitting their dissemination and evaluation of their impact upon women.